8. (Unamended) A management system according to claim 7, wherein said process to be applied to said unit is determined as to whether or not said unit is to be reused.

9. (Unamended) A management system according to claim 7, wherein said process to be applied to said unit is determined as to whether said unit is to be reused as it is, or to be reused after cleansing, or to be sent to a material-based classifying recycling process.

REMARKS

Summary

Amended independent Claim 1 recites at least one feature not disclosed or suggested by the patent to Tiru, et al. Therefore, is the outstanding rejection of this claim over this patent still proper?

Status of the claims

Claims 1-9 are pending. Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 1 is independent.

Requested action

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding objection and rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Title objection

The Examiner objects to the title and requires a new title that is more clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed. In response, while not conceding the propriety of the objection, Applicant has provided a new title that is more clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

Allowable subject matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication that Claim 6 recites patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. This claim has not been redrafted in independent form because the independent claim from which it depends is allowable for the reasons discussed below.

Rejection

Claims 1-5 and 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tiru, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,743,557).

Response to rejection

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, Claim 1 has been amended. Applicant submits that as amended, Claim 1 is allowable for the following reasons.

Independent Claim 1 relate to an apparatus comprising a unit which is recoverable and reusable after use. The apparatus further comprises an environmental history indicator member disposed inside the unit or adjacent to the unit. The environmental history indicator member has

a property variable in accordance with an environmental history of use of the apparatus and it is arrange so as not to participate in any functions of the apparatus during use of the apparatus.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the property of the environmental history indicator member deteriorates over time to assume a state of deterioration. Claim 1 also has been amended to recite that the environmental history indicator member maintains the state of deterioration of the property.

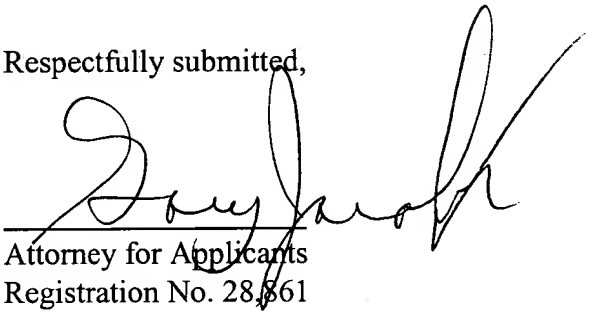
In contrast, the patent to Tiru, et al. is not understood to disclose or suggest an environmental history indicator member that maintains the state of deterioration of a property variable in accordance with an environmental history of use of an apparatus, as recited by amended Claim 1. For this reason, amended Claim 1 is allowable over this patent.

The dependent claims are allowable for the reasons given with respect to the independent claims and because they recite features which are patentable in their own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the claims are now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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MARKED-UP AMENDED SPECIFICATION

Please substitute the following paragraph for the paragraph starting at page 2, line 9 and ending at line 13. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto is attached.

--It has recently become desirous, [in respect of] to provide an effective use of resources and in consideration of the environment, to recover and reclaim marketed products (apparatuses) to reuse, at a certain rate, and materials used for the products.--

Please substitute the following paragraph for the paragraph starting at page 2, line 21 and ending at line 26. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto is attached.

--However, even if it is assured that such a unit having a long service life is reusable within a product (apparatus) after [an] enduring service under severe environmental conditions, it is desirous but has been impossible to [find how severe] determine the severity of the service conditions the unit has undergone within the recovered product.--

Please substitute the following paragraph for the paragraph starting at page 2, line 27 and ending at page 3, line 8. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto is attached.

--In other words, a product (apparatus) containing such a component unit therein might have been either used, for example, in a well air-conditioned environment or used all day long under the scorching heat of the sun, until the end of its service life. However, it has been hardly possible to simply examine the used component unit for latent deterioration in a nondestructive manner before it is recycled for reuse in another product after its previous service.--

Please substitute the following paragraph for the paragraph starting at page 3, line 20 and ending a page 4, line 7. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto is attached.

--Accordingly, when the apparatus is recovered after the end of service life thereof, the environmental history indicator member makes it possible to find what kinds of environment the unit has [undergone so far within the apparatus] been used in, by measuring the deteriorated state of the property of the environmental history indicator member, i.e., finding how the property has deteriorated, with an inspection device or the like. Therefore, the unit can be [accurately] decided to be [reusable] reused or to be not [reusable] reused (for example, sending the unit to a material based classifying recycling process) based on more complete information. Thus, the environmental history indicator member permits a management system to be simply and efficiently arranged for recovering and reusing the unit contained in the apparatus.--

Please substitute the following paragraph for the paragraph starting at page 8, line 1 and ending at line 8. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto is attached.

--In order to perform accurate quality control over such differences in damage rate, the environmental history indicator member 2, which has been formed beforehand in such a shape as to match with an inspection device 5, is removed from the body 3 of the recovered apparatus to

examine, with the inspection device 5, any changes in the property of the environmental history indicator member 2.--

Please substitute the following paragraph for the paragraph starting at page 9, line 19 and ending at line 28. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto is attached.

--According to the arrangement of the embodiment of the invention described above, a deteriorated state of property of the environmental history indicator member 2 is measured by means of the inspection device 5. By this inspection method, it is possible to find in what kind of environment the lens unit 1 has been used within the [apparatus] recovered apparatus. A decision then can be accurately made as to whether or not the lens unit 1 can be reused. Therefore, a recovering and reusing management system for the lens unit 1 can be simply and efficiently arranged.--

Please substitute the following paragraph for the paragraph starting at page 11, line 14 and ending at line 27. A marked-up copy of this paragraph, showing the changes made thereto is attached.

--According to the invention, as described above, an environmental history indicator member which does not participate in the functions of the apparatus and has such a property that varies or deteriorates according to the environmental history of service of the apparatus is used and the state of deterioration in property of the environmental history indicator member is measured with an inspection device. Accordingly, it is possible to find what kind of environment the unit has undergone so far inside the recovered apparatus [recovered]. Thus, the unit can be accurately decided to be reusable or to be no longer reusable. A recovering and reusing management system, therefore, can be simply and efficiently arranged for recovering and reuse of the unit.--

MARKED-UP AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Amended) An apparatus [including] comprising a unit which is recoverable and reusable after use, said apparatus further comprising:

an environmental history indicator member disposed inside said unit or adjacent to said unit, said environmental history indicator member having a property variable [according to] in accordance with an environmental history of use of said apparatus and being arranged so as not to participate in any functions of said apparatus during use of said apparatus,

wherein the property of said environmental history indicator member deteriorates over time to assume a state of deterioration, and

wherein said environmental history indicator member maintains the state of deterioration of the property.